

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 01613 241358Z

46

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 OMB-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2036

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 1613

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ZA, RH, PINS

SUBJECT: WILL IAN SMITH ABDICATE?

REF: LUSAKA 1543

1. ZAMBIA SUNDAY TIMES OF AUGUST 24 REPORTS IAN SMITH'S LATEST PUBLIC STATEMENT NEAR BULAWAYO RULING OUT DISCUSSION ON MAJORITY RULE AT VICTORIA FALLS BRIDGE TALKS OPENING AUGUST 25. SMITH QUOTED AS DENYING IT HIS POLICY TO HAND OVER RHODESIA TO ANY BODY OF PEOPLE OTHER THAN CONSTITUTIONALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT AND CONCLUDING THAT IF TALKS FAIL HE WOULD EMBARK ON NEW COURSE. TIMES INTERPRETS THIS AS IMPLYING STEPPED UP ANTI-GUERILLA CAMPAIGN IN NORTHEASTERN RHODESIA.

2. UK HICOM SOURCES IN LUSAKA INTERPRET STATEMENTS DIFFERENTLY, SUGGESTING THAT IMPLICIT BEHIND SMITH'S STATEMENT COULD BE DECISION BY SMITH TO STEP DOWN FROM RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR INEVITABILITY OF MAJORITY RULE. THIS SPECULATION ABOUT IMMINENT POSSIBILITY
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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 01613 241358Z

OF SMITH'S DEMISE SEEMS TO FIT IN WITH CHONA'S OBSERVATIONS ON

RETURNING FROM PRETORIA AGREEMENT. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT CHONA
SAW SMITH'S FAVOR DEFINITELY EBBING WITH VORSTER WHO
SEEMED TO PREFER COMPANY OF RHODESIAN MINISTER OF INFORMATION
DE KOCK RATHER THAN SMITH WHOM VORSTER SEEMED DELIBERATELY
ISOLATING. ALSO SINCE RETURNING TO LUSAKA CHONA HAS BEEN
OVERHEARD SPEAKING OF "SMITH, OR HIS SUCCESSOR".
WILKOWSKI

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NNN

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